

Spring Turkey Harvest Report 2013

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Abstract

A total of 37,804 turkeys were harvested during the 2013 spring turkey hunt. The spring season was comprised of 6 hunting periods in 7 turkey management zones, 17 state parks, and Fort McCoy. The uncorrected success rate for permit holders was 17%, based on a total of 217,798 permits issued. Hunter success rates of 20% or above occurred in only 1 of the 7 major hunting zones. Highest success rates per hunting period occurred in the third period of the season. Seventy-three percent of the harvested males were adults, down from 82% in the 2012 harvest. Two hunting accidents occurred during the spring season; both accidents involved hunters mistaking another individual for game.

Methods

Harvest information was obtained through mandatory registration of harvested turkeys. All turkey hunters are required to report their harvest with 24 hours of the kill via phone-in registration or via the WDNR website. All registered birds are given a confirmation number which the hunter must retain until the bird is consumed. Registration records were then compiled and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

Hunting Zones

Wisconsin is divided into 7 Turkey Management Zones (TMZ) with similar timber, agriculture, ownership, and hunter and turkey densities (Figure 1). Twelve state parks and Fort McCoy allow limited access for turkey hunting as well. Most parts of the state have some amount of turkey activity during the year.

Permit Levels

Permit levels in each zone are decided upon by the WDNR Turkey Committee. Consideration is given to the following when permits levels are set: previous hunter success rates, turkey population and distribution within a zone, square miles of turkey range (i.e., square miles of timber), recruitment, winter severity, and hunter interference rates (Table 1).

A total of 217,798 permits were issued in 2013 compared to 201,691 in 2012 and 210,384 in 2011. A total of 143,017 applications were received for the spring hunt. There were 135,418 permits issued via a drawing/preference process to these applicants by mail. A total of 7,599 applicants did not get a permit through the drawing process. These applicants either applied for oversubscribed zones or restricted their choices to the first 3 hunt periods where there were more applicants than permits. One zone was oversubscribed in 2013.

This was the eighth year that leftover permits were sold (\$10 for resident, \$15 for non-residents) over the counter (OTC) at WDNR license sales locations on a first-come, first-served basis at a rate of one permit per day. This continued until all permits available for a zone were issued or the season closed. A total of 82,707 permits were issued this way.

Permit Selection

All applicants were required to pay a \$3 application fee for a spring turkey permit application to enter the preference drawing. Preference for permits was given first to landowners (up to 30% of permits available per zone/time period combination), followed by residents who applied for but did not receive a permit in the spring of 2012, other residents, and finally non-residents. Applications were randomly selected, but first choice zone and time period of all applicants within each preference category were issued available permits before second, third, fourth, etc. choices were filled.

Age Ratio

Adult gobblers comprised 73% of the 2013 spring turkey harvest (Table 2). This proportion is lower than the 2012 level of 82% and more typical of year of “normal” recruitment during which harvests comprised of 70% adults. The change in the percent adults in the 2013 harvest did match with an increase in recruitment in 2012. Hunters being more selective in harvesting turkeys in the spring and selecting adult Toms may have affected this ratio as well.

Harvest and Success Rates

The 2013 spring turkey harvest was 37,804 birds taken (Figure 1, Table 3). This was 11% fewer than the 42,612 killed in 2012 and well short of the record harvest total for the state of 52,880 take in 2008. The hunter success rate of 17% was lower than last year’s 21% and below the long-term average.

Good hunter success rates (defined as above 20%) occurred in only 1 of the 7 main turkey zones open to spring hunting (Table 4). TMZ 2 was the only one above 20% and had the highest hunter success rate at 21%, while all other TMZ’s were between 12-17%. The highest success rates per period occurred in the third period of the season, at 19%. Most of the Northern turkey zones and a few portions of the central zones still had snow on the ground for much of the first 2 time periods. A very late arriving spring and much below average temperatures probably effected turkeys and hunters during these initial hunting periods. A more normal weather pattern returned to the state for the latter hunting periods. These periods had more normal spring phenology, and because of the delayed snow melt and warm weather there may have been increased breeding behavior during these later periods. Recruitment was below normal in 2012 but above 2011 levels and turkey numbers may have been up from past springs in parts of the state.

A statewide youth turkey hunt was held for the seventh time in the spring of 2013. This was the fourth spring of the mentored hunting law, which allows youth ages 10 and older to hunt without a Hunter’s Education card as long as they were accompanied by an 18 year or older adult. All youth ages 10-15 that had obtained a Hunter’s Ed card or were a mentored hunter, and held a valid turkey permit and license were eligible to hunt. Youth were restricted to the zone of their valid turkey permit but the permit could be from any time period. The hunt occurred on the 6-7th of April, with 2,051 turkeys being harvested (Table 3). All unused permits were still valid for the zone and time period of issuance.

Accidents

There were two hunting accidents during the 2013 spring turkey hunt; 3 in 2011 and 2012. Both of the accidents involved one hunter mistakenly shooting someone when they thought they were shooting at a turkey. Turkey hunting continues to be a very safe sport with less than 3 accidents per 100,000 permits.

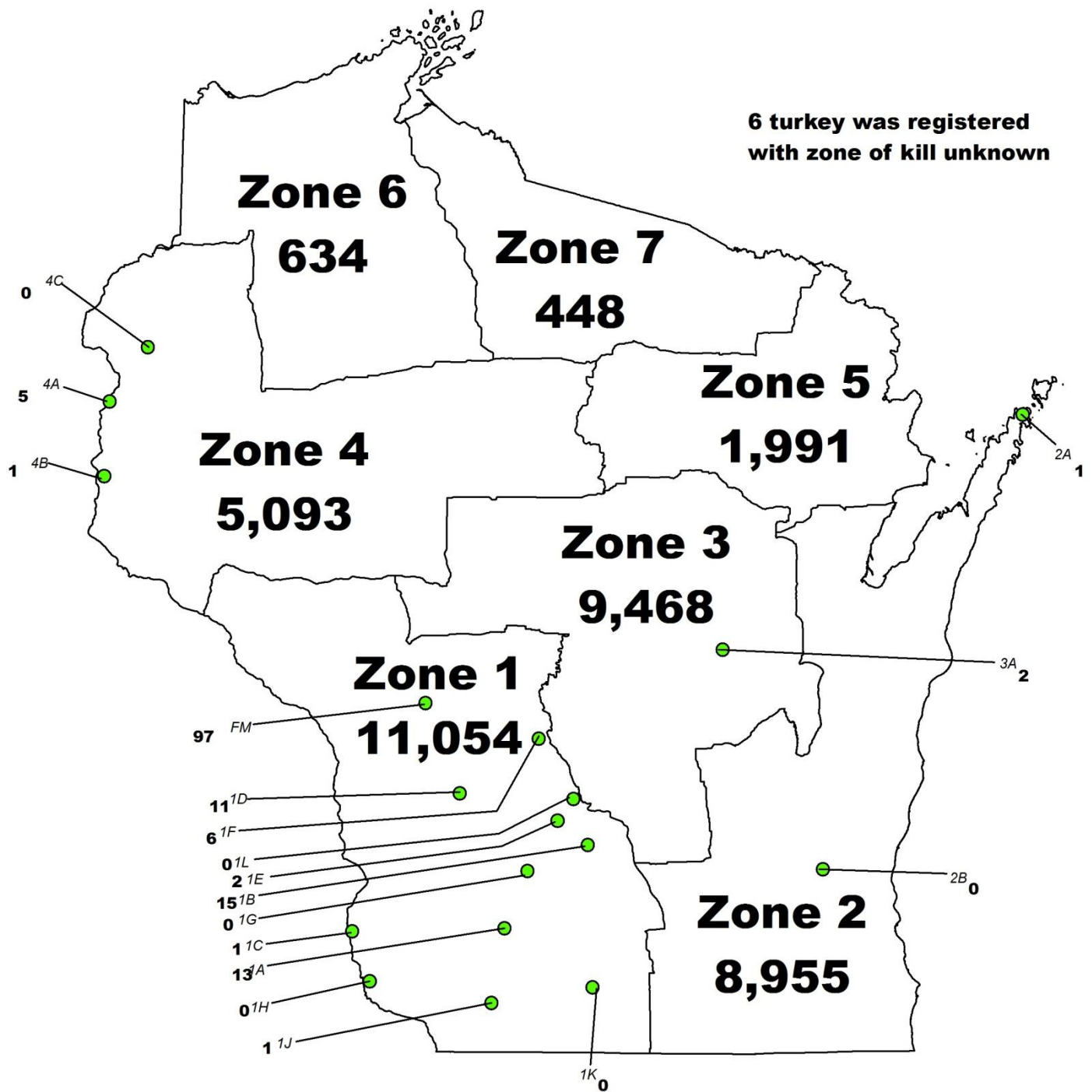


Figure 1. Spring Turkey harvest by zone, 2013.

Table 1. Total number of spring turkey permits issued, 1994-2013.

Zone	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997 ^a	1998 ^a	1999 ^a	2000 ^a	2001 ^a	2002 ^a	2003 ^a	2004 ^a	2005 ^a	2006 ^a	2007 ^a	2008 ^a	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	50,299	44,661	48,117	54,265	56,983	59,534	67,476	68,990	68,434	68,820	71,764	72,303	71,806	70,893	70,167	70,068	68,806	67,152	59,875	66,061
2	5,252	5,497	7,005	8,562	10,057	11,017	13,496	15,496	16,656	18,600	22,616	23,850	27,022	28,857	29,729	34,196	34,344	34,198	40,797	41,999
3	9,852	10,630	12,558	19,460	22,193	27,007	32,859	44,858	50,102	52,800	56,896	59,100	59,215	59,876	60,390	59,694	56,273	54,611	48,898	54,430
4	2,978	4,603	5,309	7,106	8,384	10,901	14,031	16,558	18,701	21,890	26,143	28,524	30,076	31,632	33,032	34,909	35,295	34,908	31,974	34,914
5	2,652	2,803	2,504	2,806	2,845	3,094	3,564	4,688	5,408	6,300	8,510	9,303	9,463	10,055	10,722	11,989	12,087	11,994	11,654	11,998
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,350	2,011	2,763	4,200	4,510	4,495	4,499	4,500
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,203	1,200	1,500	2,400	2,400	2,400	3,602	3,600
FM	222	235	0	449	463	463	610	555	555	0	482	510	510	510	384	398	351	325	392	296
Total	71,255	68,429	75,493	92,648	100,925	112,016	132,036	151,145	159,856	168,410	186,411	193,590	200,645	205,034	208,687	217,854	214,066	210,083	201,691	217,798

^a Data was compiled from "old" turkey zone information**Table 2. Percent of the harvest composed of adult gobblers, 1994-2013.**

Zone	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997 ^a	1998 ^a	1999 ^a	2000 ^a	2001 ^a	2002 ^a	2003 ^a	2004 ^a	2005 ^a	2006 ^a	2007 ^a	2008 ^a	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	73	59	72	72	67	63	75	79	72	75	78	86	71	73	78	84	80	77	82	73
2	75	62	64	72	66	63	68	77	69	73	79	86	75	78	80	87	81	78	84	76
3	70	55	70	71	70	68	76	80	73	76	76	87	68	75	81	84	77	76	81	72
4	71	61	67	63	61	55	71	75	72	77	76	86	71	73	81	88	83	79	81	69
5	63	48	45	61	53	56	66	70	68	83	75	82	71	76	83	86	81	75	82	76
6													75	69	79	87	80	75	78	76
7													76	75	77	83	83	77	81	75
FM															89	90	85	88	79	87
Statewide	74	59	70	71	68	65	74	79	72	76	78	87	72	75	81	86	80	77	82	73

^a Data was compiled from "old" turkey zone information

Table 3. The 2013 spring turkey harvest by zone and time period.

Success rates are uncorrected for nonparticipation.																
Zone	A		B		C		D		E		F		Special Hunts		Total	
	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Kill	% Success	Learn to Hunt	Youth Hunt	Kill	% Success
01	2,098	17%	2,079	17%	2,337	19%	1,647	13%	1,423	13%	942	17%	93	435	11,054	17%
02	1,487	21%	1,505	21%	1,527	22%	1,242	18%	1,294	18%	1,293	18%	194	413	8,955	21%
03	1,839	18%	1,808	17%	1,909	18%	1,511	14%	1,186	14%	710	18%	122	383	9,468	17%
04	719	12%	737	13%	959	16%	830	14%	810	14%	790	14%	51	197	5,093	15%
05	359	18%	365	18%	359	18%	244	12%	321	16%	250	13%	21	72	1,991	17%
06	131	17%	86	11%	119	16%	88	12%	84	11%	77	10%	18	31	634	14%
07	66	11%	54	9%	79	13%	85	14%	69	12%	76	13%	3	16	448	12%
01A	3	25%	4	29%	5	45%	0		0		0		0	1	13	35%
01B	7	47%	3	20%	4	27%	0		1		0		0	0	15	33%
01C	0	0%	1	13%	0	0%	0		0		0		0	0	1	4%
01D	6	46%	2	17%	3	27%	0		0		0		0	0	11	31%
01E	0	0%	1	20%	1	20%	0		0		0		0	0	2	13%
01F	4	18%	1	5%	1	5%	0		0		0		0	0	6	10%
02A	0	0%	0	0%	1	17%	0		0		0		0	0	1	6%
03A	0	0%	1	17%	1	17%	0		0		0		0	0	2	11%
04A	1	50%	2	100%	0	0%	1		0		1		0	0	5	83%
04B	0	0%	0	0%	1	13%	0		0		0		0	0	1	4%
04C	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0		0		0		0	0	0	0%
01G	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0		0		0		0	0	0	0%
01H	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0		0		0		0	0	0	0%
01J	1	50%	0	0%	0		0		0		0		0	0	1	33%
01K	0	0%	0	0%	0		0		0		0		0	0	0	0%
01L	0	0%	0	0%	0		0		0		0		0	0	0	0%
02B	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0		0	0	0	0%
FM	25	47%	19	51%	23	29%	15	19%	9	26%	5	31%	0	1	97	33%
Unks	2	0%		0%	3	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0	6	0%
Total	6,748	17%	6,668	17%	7,332	19%	5,663	14%	5,197	15%	4,145	16%	502	1,549	37,804	17%

Table 4. *Hunter success rates (percent successful) for 1994-2013.*

Zone	1994 ^a	1995 ^a	1996 ^a	1997 ^a	1998 ^a	1999 ^a	2000 ^a	2001 ^a	2002 ^a	2003 ^a	2004 ^a	2005 ^a	2006 ^a	2007 ^a	2008 ^a	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
1	18%	23%	24%	22%	27%	29%	28%	25%	24%	24%	24%	22%	21%	22%	23%	22%	22%	18%	20%	17%
2	18%	21%	22%	22%	25%	29%	29%	28%	27%	32%	32%	31%	29%	28%	30%	30%	28%	25%	26%	21%
3	17%	23%	27%	26%	31%	32%	31%	26%	24%	24%	24%	22%	22%	25%	24%	22%	19%	18%	21%	17%
4	17%	20%	21%	22%	31%	31%	29%	28%	27%	26%	27%	26%	27%	30%	28%	28%	23%	18%	19%	15%
5	10%	14%	14%	16%	18%	23%	26%	24%	24%	20%	22%	21%	21%	24%	25%	22%	20%	18%	19%	17%
6													28%	25%	26%	21%	19%	18%	17%	14%
7													19%	20%	22%	15%	17%	16%	16%	12%
FM Total	30%	41%		25%	32%	32%	29%	28%	25%	0%	25%	28%	22%	24%	33%	27%	26%	20%	28%	33%
Statewide	18%	22%	24%	23%	28%	30%	29%	26%	25%	25%	25%	24%	23%	25%	25%	24%	22%	19%	21%	17%

^a Data was compiled from “old” turkey zone information

Spring Permits Issued and Harvest 1983-2013

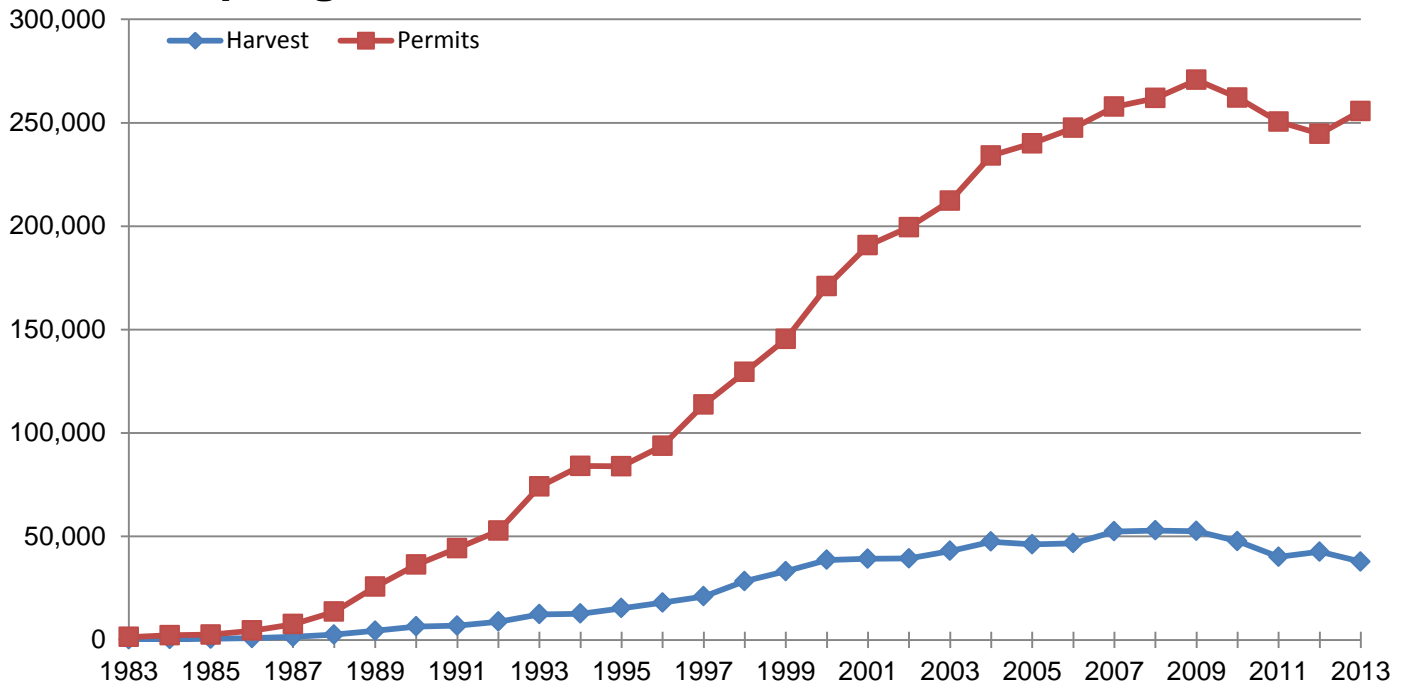


Figure 2. Spring turkey permits issued and harvest, 1983-2013.

Table 5. Historical number of permits issued, harvest, and permit success for spring turkey hunting, 1983-2013.

Year	Permits	Harvest	Permit Success
1983	1,200	182	15.2%
1984	1,950	303	15.5%
1985	2,025	496	24.5%
1986	3,675	793	21.6%
1987	6,040	1,478	24.5%
1988	11,070	2,486	22.5%
1989	21,280	4,400	20.7%
1990	29,877	6,465	21.6%
1991	37,414	6,846	18.3%
1992	43,925	8,798	20.0%
1993	61,767	12,316	19.9%
1994	71,420	12,637	17.7%
1995	68,588	15,323	22.3%
1996	75,812	18,000	23.7%
1997	92,734	20,992	22.6%
1998	101,141	28,338	28.0%
1999	112,256	33,168	29.5%
2000	132,318	38,686	29.2%
2001	151,522	39,211	25.9%
2002	160,101	39,336	24.6%
2003	169,277	42,970	25.4%
2004	186,608	47,477	25.4%
2005	193,826	46,183	23.8%
2006	200,869	46,662	23.2%
2007	205,306	52,428	25.5%
2008	208,972	52,880	25.3%
2009	218,133	52,581	24.1%
2010	214,356	47,722	22.3%
2011	210,384	40,133	19.1%
2012	201,984	42,612	21.1%
2013	217,798	37,804	17.4%